

**WASHINGTON, Monday, September 11**—— U.S. Rep. Spencer Bachus (R-AL) has urged State School Superintendent Ed Richardson to expedite the use of more than \$2.2 million Congress appropriated to help Alabama students from low-income families escape failing schools.

"It is unfair to keep Alabama's neediest children trapped in failing schools that do not teach and will not change. All our children deserve a first-class education, regardless of their family's income. This money can be a lifeline to underprivileged children caught in dire educational circumstances," said Bachus.

Last year, Congress passed a new law that -- for the first time -- gives parents the choice of taking their children out of schools classified in need of school improvement. Schools in this category fail to make adequate progress on improving student achievement for two consecutive years.

More than \$2.2 million in federal Title I funding became available to the state in July and can be used to transfer students out of these failing public schools. The state has up to 15 months to allocate the money, but Bachus has contacted Richardson and urged him to accelerate the process.

"No child should be forced to spend another year in a bad school. Fifteen months is too long to wait for children stuck in schools where troubles are common and learning is rare," said Bachus.

The federal Title I program was created in 1965 as the federal government's principal means of closing the achievement gap between students from low-income families and their counterparts. It provides approximately \$126 million in federal funds annually to local school districts in Alabama to supplement the education of disadvantaged students.